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Moser History

and

A Description of their native home land Switzerland

1793-1894

1802155

MOSER - HISTORY
AND
A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR NATIVE HOME LAND SWITZERLAND

1793 - 1894

Compiled by Abraham J. Moser, the youngest son of Jacob Moser who came to America from Switzerland in 1821 and settled in Wayne County, Ohio. They had one child, Marian.

Jacob and Barnera (Wahli) Moser lived on the Chestnut Ridge on the late Deacon Moser place, or of lately David J. Moser of the third generation of Jacob Moser.

There Abraham was born in 1845, the tenth and youngest son of Jacob Moser, in the Sonnenberg Settlement.

Abraham was also a School Teacher. In his youth he journeyed to Latham, Missouri where he was married to Caroline Welty.

Abraham worked of and on this MOSER history for some forty years as his memoirs came to him. In 1884 he visited his friends in Wayne County, Ohio and gathered more information on his history from Switzerland and of his relationship and his ancestors.

In 1894 he compiled this Moser history written in German or Swiss. In 1947 it was translated to English by Heneretta (Sommer) Dyk; Abraham was a Great Uncle to her.

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Giving some description of Switzerland - - - - - - - - - - - 3 - 6.

Abraham's parents and ancestors, and their former native home places; a history of their religion; life in the Jura Mountain by a writer of Switzerland, Henry Zachckka; their Christian living and vocation - 6 - 10.

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ON LONELY PATHS

REMEMBRANCES OF THE PAST, 1894

The most pleasant as well as the sharpest remembrances of life do not awaken on the broad highway in the pressure and confusion of social life, but on lonely paths and in the quiet of the domestic hearth. During quiet communion with one's self, the clearest memories of the past arise and stimulate wanderings in the realm of thought.

My reminiscences, stimulated by many memories and experiences, do not begin only now. I began them even in my youthful years, at that time mainly in the realm of religious faith and church life, with which I had intimate acquaintance from the very beginning. It was not until the past ten years that my reasoning gradually took its present free direction, and grew farther away from the traditions of my forbears, and from the belief in supernatural revelation and biblical infallibility, which is generally held in the circle of my close friends. For this reason I find myself on a lonely pathway, because among my old friends and acquaintances there is no one who shows the slightest inclination to join me. I haven't especially sought company, but I was given clearly enough to understand that my wanderings were considered useless, and that my reprehensible exploration in swampy ground exposed me to the danger of sinking down, never to be seen again. So I am on a lonely path, insofar as close companionship is concerned. Religious belief surrounds me on all sides and brings up its batteries against free thought and "Wicked unbelief."

Although I occasionally feel the need of companionship with kindred spirits, I am not plagued with boredom. I hardly ever have time to think of boredom. Useful and worthwhile knowledge has so much to offer me that my leisure hours are never long enough to give it the attention I should like to. I often find much greater satisfaction in the noble writings of profound searchers and earnest thinkers than in the often senseless repetition of everyday affairs, such as hog and cattle feed, the mule market, etc., which one has to listen to every Sunday in certain circles. This latter method of social intercourse can, under certain circumstances, be quite profitable, and for this reason I should pay attention to it during this time which is so unfavorable to the farmer. However, it is quite natural that one should spend his leisure time in those pursuits which offer him the greatest satisfaction, and for which he has the greatest inclination.

How far back in time my childhood memories go I cannot determine exactly. However, they do go back to the cradle. Certain repa
were being made in the house of my parents, and the attendant confusion must have made enough of an impression on me to cause me to remember very clearly how my sister picked me up out of the chaos, laid me in the little bed, and put me to sleep. I may have been several years old at the time, for, since I am the

youngest of our family, I probably had the privilege of using the cradle for an unusually long time. My memory takes me over a period of more than forty-five years for I was born on the 28th of September, 1845, so I was 49 years old in September of this year (1894) and surely nobody sang a cradle song to me after I was four years old.

Forty-five years is a long period to collect memories and many things can happen. For the world in general, the past 45 years have certainly been eventful, and for me they have been no less so although I have not experienced any adventures. I have never hunted elephants, have never bled on the field of battle, have never swum ashore on a plank from a burning ship through a stormy sea, have never plunged over a precipice with a derailed train. I was never attacked by robbers, have seen neither ghosts nor angels, and although I believed in miracles at one time, one never occurred before my eyes. Everything that happened to me was in a quite natural way, and according to the law of cause and effect. In accordance with this, I got slaps at home and whippings in school, and once I nearly drowned in a fishpond as a result of practicing the art of diving. When I was a little boy in dresses, I once stepped so close to the wheel of a thrashing machine, that it would have required only a small movement on my part to catch my dress in the machine. Seeing the danger, Uncle C. L. came up softly behind me and pulled me away suddenly so that my limbs were stiff with terror. According to reliable reports, when I was still a little squirt, an enraged cow picked me up on her horns. On another occasion one of my brothers took me along when he went fishing in the brook. I ran around in the field and soon came back with a "pretty little animal" in my hands, which my brother killed with horror. He impressed upon me, in no uncertain terms, that henceforth I was to leave snakes alone. I followed his advice, especially after I discovered what a bad time Eve had with the serpent in Paradise.

Later I had an accident with a substance which came into use long after the fall, that is, gunpowder. It happened this way: A well was dug near our barn, but since rock was encountered, it had to be blasted. Water seeped into the boreholes, so little tin containers were made to prevent the gunpowder from getting wet. One of these containers, however, had a leak, the powder got wet and didn't explode, whereupon everything was taken out and laid in the sun to dry. In the meantime Sunday came and one of my playmates came to visit. We saw the container with the gunpowder, and since we had heard that one could make a "fire-devil" with wet gunpowder, we decided to have some fun. I got matches and tinder which my father used to light his tobacco pipe, and we went behind an old stable where the future "fire-devil" was laid on a heap of logs. We put a rather long piece of tinder into the bent opening of the container, lighted it and awaited results. But it seemed to us that things were happening much too slowly, so I went up to it to speed things up a bit. The tinder was not half burned yet, but hardly had I touched it when the "devil" went off with a crash that made our hair stand on end, and in addition, he had the nerve to touch my hand in such a way that it got brown and black, and I was in such pain that I didn't know right from left. As if driven by instinct, I ran to a spring

which came out at the base of a hill down in the woods. There I cooled my hand, but since the entire inner surface was a mass of blisters, the amelioration was only partial, so I finally had to go home to mother, who poured oil on my wound and wine into my mind. One could see, she said, what happens when one pulls tricks like that on a Sunday. Whether it wouldn't have gone off on a weekday, I don't know. Since that time I had no inclination to make further experiments.

Since it is customary among the nobility to trace one's ancesty, and since I am of the opinion that I come from a very noble race, I want to look about among my ancestors and their homeland.

I am proud of the country of my birth, the free states of America. But I consider it no less an honor that the home of my parents and their forbears is to be found in the beautiful land of Switzerland. That Switzerland is a beautiful and romantic country, I do not know from my own experience, since up to the present time I have not had the opportunity to travel there. But I have read and heard many descriptions, and since there is an inherited homesickness for Switzerland in my temperament, these descriptions have aroused in me a strong desire to see the land where my brave ancestors proved their powers in the struggle for existence, and experienced the joys of life.

In order to satisfy this desire in some measure, I have gathered the following description from various sources:

Switzerland is a mountainous country and forms an almost continuous chain of hills, mountains, and mountain ranges. It is a country of incomparable natural beauty, for between the hills and mountains lie the pleasantest valleys, and through the plains are spurs of mountains and valleys which connect with the mountains with beautifully planted slopes. Here gentle landscapes alternate with spectacular and wildly romantic mountain scenes. The eye follows with enchantment the pleasant windings of the mountain streams, and looks with pleasure at the mirror-like surfaces of the numerous lakes surrounded by lovely shores which add incomparable allure to the scene. Then again one sees the snow and ice regions of the Alps whose peaks rise majestically toward heaven.

On the western side of Switzerland rises, like a wall, the range of the Jura, a uniform, massive range. It rises in a series of terraces from the valley of the Saone in France, and from its highest elevation slopes as steeply as a roof toward the chief plain of Switzerland. Its highest elevation is however, not much over five thousand feet. If one looks from this summit toward the southeast, however, one can see the whole of the high plain of Switzerland, which in the far distance is enclosed by the silvery wreath of the high Alps of the Bernese Oberland. The shimmering of the everlasting snows gives a majestic look to the scene and bears witness to the tremendous forces of nature which produced these mountains eons ago.

From the Jura one can see the wide valley in its entirety as far as the fog-covered Alps. Only the Alps rise into the heavens, and here and there one of the high peaks rises above the fog like an island.

The Alps run through the southeastern part of Switzerland; however, with their ramifications and foothills they cover most of the country; in one place they stretch out as lovely hills, in another they rise to peaks and mountain chains. The actual High Alps fill the onlooker with astonishment over their size and beauty. In indescribable majesty their peaks rise like immeasurable towers into the sky, and if one is successful in climbing them, one can see into distant lands. A feeling of awe overcomes the viewer of this alpine world, for here one sees one peak piled upon another, divided sometimes by as many as seven or more terrific precipices, and they reach a height which reaches up above the clouds. These mountain giants stand as if created for eternity and the storms of centuries leave no trace. Even the shimmering cloak and the twelve-to-fifteen thousand foot high white turban is never changed; for this is the home of the everlasting snows, which, in the course of centuries have piled up into thick layers which in places are as much as two hundred feet deep. In these snowy and icy regions, among the precipices and glaciers originate mighty streams which flow through the surrounding lands in opposite directions. The Rhine, the Rhone, the Tessin and in part the Danube, receive the clear waters of Switzerland and carry them in the four cardinal directions toward the sea.

The high valleys of the Alps are filled with mighty masses of ice called glaciers which often extend for many miles. The ice of these glaciers is not smooth and even like ordinary ice but broken and blocky, for it is not frozen water but frozen snow. In the highest regions where the snow never melts there are no glaciers neither are there any in the lower regions where the snow melts entirely. But where, in the heat of the summer, a part of it thaws and runs from the upper layers into the lower ones, then the whole soft watery mass may freeze when one of the frequent sudden cold spells occurs. In this manner whole mountains of fields of ice have been built up through the centuries and these are called glaciers.

At a distance of from thirty to fifty miles these glaciers offer one of the most spectacular views of nature when seen in the light of the setting sun. They shimmer like marvellous palaces in the gold and silver light, and myriads of spots of light glow like windows and lighthouses.

An indescribable feeling of awesome wonder overwhelms him who, for the first time goes from the blooming fields in the Thun and Brienz lake regions to the icy world of glaciers. Down below is a lovely summer landscape; with pleasure the eye of the mountain climber rests on the lovely scene. Take a few steps through a narrow pass, and before him lies spread out the chain of the high Alps, rigid with snow and ice with its yawning precipices, jagg

peaks and glowing glaciers. With amazement and awe he gazes at the terrible and yet beautiful panorama, and experiences, in its astounding size and wintry beauty the eternity and majesty of the world force as never before. What has the hand of man ever created, which in nobility can be compared to the masterwork of Nature? What tremendous forces must have been active to produce these mountains! And how many tens of thousands of years has the ceaseless battle of the elements taken place in these canyons and slopes! Should not a people, which constantly sees such majesty, develop a depth of feeling peculiar to itself?

As alps in the narrower sense are designated the grass-covered areas which branch off from the high mountains, and to these areas cattle are driven during the summer for grazing. These are the "Chuier-Alps" (Cow-Alps) on which they sing with joy:

A Swiss am I, a happy shepherd
Born for freedom and the Alps
The rock, where only the lonely chamois wanders
That have I taken for my home.
At the outermost edge of the world,
High above the clouds I have placed my little hut.

Down below I see in a terrible chasm
An eagle in flight
The valleys, lost in a bluish haze
The villages and cities lie there.
I see it, and look with joyous thoughts,
High above the sorrows of mortals.

Down below the valley is shrouded in clouds
The wind roars dully in the canyons
The thunder rolls wildly, the lightning flash
Brings ruin to villages and buildings.
And here the sky is so friendly, so blue
I wander here quietly in a flowering meadow.

Down below in avarice and pride and trickery,
The constant source of sorrow,
It arms man to bloody strife
It makes his earth a hell.
Therefore I am so glad to be here alone,
will gladly enjoy the peaceful flock.

In the lofty free heights of the mountains the happy shepherds or alp-people work during the summer and prepare milk, butter, cheese and clabbered milk, etc. Their work is tedious and hard, but at the same time they experience life's joys. The mountains of his homeland are to him the dearest place on earth and no one parts willingly from them if circumstances do not drive him to it. There he breathes the fresh mountain air which heightens his spirits, drinks from the spring which gushes from the rock, and

walks on the dizzy heights or along the quiet lake shore. And even if he had to struggle here with want and poverty, he often thinks back with longing on his beloved homeland where the eternal snows and the glaciers glow in the sun's rays, and where the wild mountain brooks rush through the valleys, when he is in foreign lands where an easier lot is his.

The mountain dwellers of Switzerland are a strong race. In the valleys and plains which are densely settled, one finds however many weak and less upright men. The inhabitants there press upon each other and it seems as if there were not enought room for them to develop physically or spiritually! One can easily comprehend that the individual has only a small area to call his own because a population of three millions occupies an area of somewhat less than sixteen thousand English square miles, of which one quarter is entirely uninhabitable.

Because the Swiss lacked room for development in his homeland, because he had to contend with actual want and bitter poverty, he sought a new home in distant America. It is now seventy-three years since my parents, as a newly married couple, joined such an emigration. Their Swiss home was in Canton Berne where their parents and their grandparents before them had lived.

My great-grandfather on the paternal side was Hans Moser and he was a genuine child of the Swiss mountains. Since he had very short, stubby fingers, he was called "Mutzfingerli-Moser". He and Dr. Uli Moser (father of the famous doctor, "Tschampo-Hans", were brothers. Whether he was especially talented I do not know, but he did have an original method of providing amusement for himself. In a forest, not very far from the village church, stood two mighty beech trees which came from the same trunk. One Sunday, while the people were assembled in church, Hans Moser took a piece of metal, filled it with gunpowder, put it between the beech trunks and lit it with tinder. The thing went off with a bang and the crash of the beeches was so tremendous that the people rushed out of the church in terror thinking that the Last Judgment had arrived. When I think of my previously related experiment, I almost believe there must be something to the doctrine of inherited sin!

My grandfather was Peter Moser. His home was in the congregation Ruderswyl, Oberamt Signau, Canton Berne, Switzerland. He was ninety-two years old when he died, and still had all his front teeth. In his sixtieth year he experienced a toothache for the first time. It was during a meal, and he was so incensed by it, that he hurled his spoon away. By occupation he was a weaver. Since this is all I know about him, I can only conclude that he was a man of strong constitution and fiery temperament who had to make his way in the world by means of hard work. His wife, my grandmother, was born Ramseyer. They had seven sons, of whom my father, Jacob Moser, was the fifth. The others were Hans, Christian, Nicholas, Samuel, Peter and Ulrich. The last of these died on his way to America. I have heard my father tell that the boys often had to help their mother peel potatoes, and that they were often not too clean about it!

My father was born in November, 1793, and on the 21st of the same month he was baptized at Hochstetten. His parents belonged to the reformed church.

My grandfather on the maternal side was Ulrich Wahli. His home was Bolligen, Canton Berne, Switzerland. He was a man of stocky build. In 1824 he came to America, and he died in 1840, at the age of seventy years, on Sonnenberg, Wayne Co., Ohio.

My grandmother, on the maternal side was Elisabeth Ramseyer from Eggiwyl.

My mother, Barbara Wahli, was the youngest of six children and was born August 31, 1802. When she was five years old her mother died. They lived at that time in the "Tschafor" in the "Curt" (Court) congregation, in the Bernese Jura. My mother went, after the death of my grandmother, to her uncle Peter Ramseyer at Munschero, en hour von Munster and half an hour from Klein Tschampo. On the 3rd of May, 1818 she was taken by baptism into the "Taufer" of Mennonite church of which her parents and relatives were members. There were at that time, and are yet, several of these churches in the Bernese Jura.

The Täufer churches originated in Switzerland more than three hundred years ago at the time of the general Reformation. Here, as in other countries they were plagued by violent persecution which lasted until the year 1671. Irritated by the spirituality of the defenseless Taufer, the Swiss government even outdid other governments in persecuting them. As the founders of the above-mentioned Jura churches were expelled from their homes by the government of Berne, in the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries, they took refuge in the Bishopric of Basel which was at that time under the temporal rule of the princely bishops of Basel. There they were tolerated but under many restrictions. They were required to live in the rugged mountain lands of the Jura which were suitable only for the cultivation of potatoes and for dairying. And this land they were not permitted to buy, they could only lease it. They were not permitted to live in villages nor to take leases on land adjoining a village, but they had to stay in the high mountains. Here they lived, after the persecutions had completely stopped, in quiet isolation in their way happy and contented, and they were glad if they could wring from the inhospitable mountain lands the yearly rent and the bare necessities of life.

At about the time when my parents were still in the prime of life, a famous Swiss writer, Henry Zschokke traveled through the Jura Mountains and wrote an interesting description of the old bishopric of Basel and its inhabitants. The following picture of the Mennonites living there is taken from his writing:

"Also over one hundred families of Taufer live here. They are scattered on the lonely heights, in valleys and on mountains, and

with their industry they wring productiveness from the most barren lands. They are a powerful race, of attractive build, loyal, peaceful, conscientious and friendly. All their neighbors are fond of them. Catholics and Protestants of the neighborhood trust them more than each other. And these sturdy people were expelled by the Berne government in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because they refused to swear an oath or carry weapons. The princely bishops of Basel, wiser and more tolerant than the Protestant government of Berne, took the rejected disciples of Menno into their temporal domain.

I was in the still mountain valleys of the Tschaiwo, at the borders of Solothurn, at Tschampo, and in other friendly wildernesses, with the Taufer. It seemed to me that I was living in the first poor times of the holy beginnings of Christianity, so bright, so godly, without any self-depreciation, hospitable and industrious, they live there in patriarchal simplicity and Christian virtue. There are no drunkards among them, no gamblers, no night prowlers, no liars, no envious neighbors. If, as seldom happens, a quarrel or difference arises between them, it is settled in the friendliest way by one of their elders. One helps the other without recompense with his work during hay or corn harvest, or whenever necessary. Their moderation and virtue preserves their health and insures them a hale old age. One of their old men of over seventy who is one of their teachers (they have no clergy) led me as nimbly as a youngster, over hill and dale, to visit other families in the congregation. What genuine love between married couples, what a tenderness between brothers and sisters, what respect for parents on the part of children did I see here. Their whole method of education rests on the example which the adults set for their children, and in the few words, "Keep God before your eyes." And yet they receive an education which is nobler than the finest to be had in the great world.

"What a people, what a Christianity, which require no lawyers, no clergy, no judges, hardly even a doctor."

"On Sundays they congregate, first with one teacher then with another, either in the open, in a barn or in a larger room, to hold services. The teacher speaks according to his mood or the needs of his listeners, or reads from an old spiritual book. He performs the rites of baptism and communion, as well as joining couples in wedlock, and is a farmer like all the rest. Baptism usually precedes the first communion, or it may directly precede the marriage of a couple. However, I must admit that their devotional, prayer and song books, as well as their hymns of martyrdom are in the style of bygone days, and therefore rather lacking in spirit.

"When services are over, those who live far away are put up at nearby homes without recompense and this hospitality will be returned at a later time.

"Clean, but without any ornament, their furniture and clothing resemble their homes. Like every churchly group in the Christian world, the Taufer have their own peculiarities. It wouldn't be so bad, that married men let their beards grow, as a symbol of masculine honor, if their costume were in a medieval or oriental and Old Testament style, like the names of their beautiful daughters. But the short, gray coat, the short trousers and the socks pulled up over the knees, are discordant with the majesty of the beard. Buttons are not allowed on clothing, so hooks and eyes are used instead. The women also are very simply dressed. No gold, no silks or velvets. Not even a bright or multicolored band is allowed on a girl's hat. But when it comes to beauty, a girl can always find ways and means, without endangering her religion. One needs only to see how well these slender, blooming daughters of the mountains know just the angle at which to set a hat, or to set the straw flowers or straw braids on it. And all is done so demurely!"

So much for Zschokke. The word of mouth reports which I have heard from my parents and others agree in general with this description. Even though the social and domestic life of those mountain dwellers may have had its shady side, which escaped a casual observer, nevertheless their virtue and loyalty rose above these like the Alps above the mountain valleys.

The occupation of these mountain dwellers was principally agriculture and dairying, but almost everyone pursued in addition some handcraft so he could earn a little during the long winters. A heavy snow falls in the mountains, so it is even with the tops of the fences, so no work can be done in field or forest. Most of them were weavers, others were cabinet makers or leather and wooden shoemakers. At the time of my parents and grandparents the chief winter occupation was weaving. Flax grew well on the mountains, so many devoted themselves to its cultivation and preparation. During the long winter snows when fields and gardens were covered, the women and girls spun a long, long yarn. In the narrow mountain valleys the winter evenings were long, since on the shortest days the sun shines only a few hours, or in certain places it doesn't shine at all for from sixteen to eighteen weeks. So the spinning wheels hummed in the light of those days, and the weaver's shuttles were heard until far into the night.

Because of the great amount of snow which piles up during the winter, house and barn are under one roof. The buildings are partly of wood with ""Wound" clay walls, consisting of a mixture of clay and straw, wound around wood and driven between the posts. Many of their buildings were made of rough limestone, plastered both inside and outside. Shingles were cut by hand and kept in place by means of stone plates so the wind would not blow them off.

Although dairying was one of their occupations, most of them could not keep many animals; perhaps a cow and a couple of goats, or a goat and a couple of cows, according to one's means. The ones

who were better off had a horse to bring in the hay. For plowing, the horse and cow were often hitched up together. It always took two men, one to plow and one to drive, and from four to six people followed the plow with hoes to break up the clods. Their plows were similar to the oldfashioned prairie plows found here, with a mechanism to regulate the depth of the plowing. They went back and forth along the hillside, with the furrows all turned downhill, so that the soil which was loosened in plowing the lowest furrow had to be transported, often carried, to the top, to fill the topmost furrow.

Not much wheat was cultivated because it doesn't ripen in the higher regions. Of the other cereals, there was some "Spalz" or "Dinkel"(?) but mostly oats and barley also some "Wicken." A mixture of these three, ground and baked formed the basis of bread for the inhabitants. It was dark and heavy, but it included the substances which are required for bodily health and strength. Their chief vegetable was the potato which had made its way from America to the isolated mountains of Europe.

All field work, such as haying and harvesting, was done with simple implements, with scythe, hand rake and sickle, and thrashing was done with flails. Men and women, hired men and girls, all worked, when need required, from four o'clock in the morning till ten o'clock at night.

Their food was most simple and permitted of very little variety. We, here, would call it a meager diet which it probably wasn't, at least if there was enough of it. It consisted of the abovementioned black bread and potatoes, milk, vegetables and a little meat, the latter seldom, perhaps on Sundays and holidays; for ordinarily only one or two pigs were butchered for each family. Meat was therefore considered a delicacy by many and when it was on the table, the father himself cut the little pieces which each one was to receive.

Little pains was taken with the table setting. Potatoes cooked in the jackets were put on the table, also a bowl of milk or soup. Each person carried a long pocket knife with him which was used at the table to cut bread, if the father had not already cut the pieces to the proper size. In addition every person at the table got a big, round spoon - now help yourself!

There were some "stylish" people who took more trouble. But butter and molasses did not weight down the tables of our ancestors and they didn't ruin their digestions with all sorts of unnecessary delicacies. The good things like butter etc. had to be taken to the village and sold for the money with which to make certain indispensable purchases, and to pay the yearly rent. As a rule, one considered a man fortunate if he could bring his family decently through, and pay the lease money. No doubt there were a few who did well enough so they could gather together a little capital for their old age; but there were many who had to call on the congregation for help.

As a matter of necessity they accustomed themselves to hard work and thrift.

FAMILY REGISTER

Dates of birth and death of my parents.

Jacob Moser, born in November 1793, in the Congregation of Höchstetten. Oberamt Knolfingen, Canton Berne, Switzerland. He died in Wayne County, Ohio, September 12, 1870, aged 76 years, 10 months.
Barbara Wahli, born August 31, 1802, in the neighborhood of Court in the Berne Jura. She died November 15, 1889 aged 87 years, 2 months and 15 days.

Dates of births and deaths of my brothers and sisters.

Marian Moser,	born	September 2, 1819, died May 27, 1903
Elizabeth Moser	"	August 9, 1821, died August 8, 1832, 11 years old.
Anna Moser	"	December 29, 1823, died August 12, 1832, 9th year.
Johannes Moser	"	Aug. 2, 1826, died July 10,1908,aged 81 y.11m.8 d.
Abraham Moser	"	June 14, 1830, died August 17,1832, 2 years old.
Katharina Moser	"	May 8,1832,died April 9,1896, nearly 64 years old.
Elizabeth Moser	"	June 7, 1834
David Moser	"	June 7,1836, died Jan. 31,1905, 68 y. 7 m. 24 d.
Jacob Moser	"	Oct. 18, 1840, Died Jan. 27, 1922.
Abraham J. Moser	"	Sept. 28, 1845, died Oct. 28, 1912.

Sister Marian married Ulrich Steiner (pastor in Putnam county, Ohio) February 24, 1838.
Brother Johannes married Anna Lehmann January 15, 1852.

The home of the Welty family was Rüderswyl, Oberamt Signau, near Langnau, Canton Berne, Switzerland. As early as 1537 we find the name of Bernhard Welty, who, as a Täufer, died a martyr's death. For many years their home had been the small mountain valley of Tschaiwo at Court, not far from Münster in Berne. The first couple of this family of whom we have any information were Ulrich and Barbara Welty, nee Lehmann. They lived in Tschaiwo as poor lease holders. The wife's home had been Wattenwyl near Worb, Berne. She died the tenth of January, 1793, and left five children, Peter, Christian, Katharina, Anna and Barbara.

Ulrich Welty was married again to Barbara Bichsel. The children of this union were Johannes, Magdalena, Verena and Katrina. Ulrich Welty attained an age high up in the eighties.

His son Peter married Barbara Gerber of Langnau, May 12, 1820. The ceremony was performed by Ulrich Rothlisberger at their home in Tschaiwo. There, on June 8, 1821, Ulrich Welty was born. In 1824 they emigrated to America. In their new home on Sonnenberg, Christian and Johann were born. Mother Barbara Welty died April 1, 1836, aged 48 years, and her husband followed her on July 26,1836.

His age was 58 years, 5 months and 5 days. He was born on February 21, 1778.

According to R. Welty's writings, there are no members of this family left in Switzerland. They all came to America.

(Map Here)

The Emigrations from the Berne Jura

First emigration, left in April, 1819
Peter Lehmann, Issac Sommer, David Kirchhofer, Ulrich Lehmann.

Second emigration, April 10, 1821
Hans Lehmann (the older) Abraham Lehmann, Hans & Christian Lehmann, Abraham and David Zurcher, Jacob Bichsel, Jacob Moser, Peter Hofstetter

Third emigration, 1822
Ulrich Gerber (teacher) Michael Gerber, Jacob Gerber

Fourth emigration 1824
Peter and Hans Welty, Johannes and Abraham Tschanz, Christian Beer, Johannes and Christian Wahli, Christian and Abraham Gilliom, Nikolaus Hofstetter, Abraham Falb, Michel Bogly, Hans Luginbuhl, David Baumgartner, Ulrich Sommer, Peter Schneck.

Fifth emigration 1825
David Althous, Ulrich and Peter Moser. From Alsace came Daniel, Ulrich and Christian Steiner; these moved to Chipaway.

Sixth emigration 1828
Johannes Heyerly, Isaac Falb and others

Seventh emigration 1835
David Baumgartner (the older) Christian, Johannes, Peter and Abraham C. Tschanz; also, from Alsace, Christian Steiner and others, who went to Putnam Co.

FAMILY CHRONICLES AND REMEMBRANCES, by A. J. M., Latham, Mo.

He who has stood on the shores of the stream of Time, and has looked over into the twilight of the past, in which the windings of the stream are gradually lost, his glance must certainly have rested on many shores, many quiet bays, from which, even if they lie in the dim distance, the small stream of his own life issued, and wound through the days of the past. He recognized the places where his parents and grandparents were first cradled by the waves,

where they ventured into the stream in the courage of youth, where storms and swells led them to the brink of destruction, where, on sunny shores they experienced life's joys, and finally reached the port of everlasting rest.

To picture the outlines of this stream,which is for me so attractive and yet so serious, and to show the time-brooklet which issues from this stream as our family, is the purpose of the following pages.

This picture takes us back to beautiful Switzerland, to the lands between the Aare and the Grossemmen in Canton Berne, and the mountain valleys of the Berne Jura.

There the changing conditions and the relationships at the time of my parents can still be recognized with considerable clarity, although the veil of forgetfulness is, even there, obscuring some of the details which would make the picture more attractive.

Only a ray of light here and there falls on the personalities of our more distant ancestors. Probably no written accounts were left behind by them. They were simple farmers and their fate was soon forgotten by the world.

When I visited the old home on Sonnenberg in Wayne County, Ohio during December, 1884, I collected information on the history of our family from my mother and sister Katharina by word of mouth, as well as from writings. In the writings of P. P. Lehmann and Christian and Ulrich Welty I found detailed reports on the manner of life of our fathers in Switzerland, on the emigration, the settling of Ohio, etc. Also Uncle Christian Luginbuhl, in his sixty-eighth year, gave me much interesting information. He was born in 1813 in the Jura Mountains, but came to America with his parents in 1824. He has retained his excellent memory, and his remembrances and experiences illuminate the past like a ray of the setting sun illuminates the twilight.

I have set myself the task to give a summary of these reports and in particular to collect the information about our own family. I therefore begin this summary with our family tree as far as this can be recognized in the past.

My paternal great-grandfather was Hans Moser. He and Doctor Uli Moser, father of the famous doctor "Tschampo-Hans" were brothers. Since his fingers were very markedly stubby, he was called "Mutzfingerli-Moser." Our family, therefore, was not of a long fingered stock.

Only one event was told me of the life of great-grandfather Moser. In a forest, not far from the village church, stood two large beech trees which issued from the same trunk. One Sunday, while the congregation was holding services in the church, Hans Moser put some gunpowder in a gun barrel, wedged it between the two beech trunks,and ignited it. A dreadful crash ensued which was

followed by the sound of the falling beeches. The peaceful congregation arose in terror, and everyone rushed into the open to see whether the Last Judgment was at hand.

No doubt great-grandfather Moser was very young at the time of this prank and since that time well on to two hundred years have passed.

My grandfather was Peter Moser. His home was near the Cross-Emmen River, in the Congregation of Ruderswyl, Oberamt Signau, Canton Berne, Switzerland. Later on his family no longer lived at Ruderswyl, but lived in the neighborhood of Grosshochstetten. Grandfather Moser was 92 years old when he died. However, I know neither the date of his birth or his death. According to all indications he was a powerful Swiss nature. I conclude this from the great age which he attained, and from the reports about his teeth, for people with good teeth usually have a strong constitution. He was in his sixtieth year when he had a toothache for the first time. It was during a meal, and the unaccustomed pain exasperated him so much, that he hurled his spoon away. At the time of his death he still had all his front teeth.

By occupation he was a weaver and from the few remarks which my father made about life at home, I gather that he was also a farmer.

His wife, my grandmother, was born Remseyer. They had seven sons, of whom my father, Jacob, was the fifth. He was born in November of the year 1793. On the 21st of the same month he was baptized at Rochstetten. His parents belonged to the Reformed Church.

When my father spoke of his home, he called it the Congregation, (or Kirchhori) Grosshochstetten, Oberamt Konolfingen, Canton Berne. Further than this I have no clear memory of his reports on his Swiss home.

My uncles, the six brothers of my father, were called Hans, Christian, Nikolaus, Samuel, Peter and Ulrich. The last mentioned of these began the journey to America in the year 1824 with a group from the Jura, of which the at that time eleven-year-old Uncle C. Luginbuhl was also a member, but he became ill in France and died there. Of the other brothers Christian and Peter came to Ohio. I can still remember them. Christian lived in Canal Dover, Tuscaravas County, Ohio. He came to Wayne County several times to visit. His sons Peter and Nikolaus also visited us. Uncle Christian, like my father, was of alender build and somewhat above medium height. Uncle Peter, on the contrary, was of short, stocky build.

He lived for some time in the vicinity of Mansfield, Ohio and then moved to Williams County in the northwestern part of the state, near the city of Bryan. From there he visited us once and I still remember that I was particularly interested in his report regarding the artesian wells which had been drilled in and around Bryan.

Like my father, he repaired watches. As far as I can remember, his family was almost all boys. However, I never learned to know them. Of the cousins remaining in Switzerland I never heard any news.

My maternal grandfather was Ulrich Wahli. His home was Bolligen, a few hours northeast of the city of Berne. He was of a firm, stocky build, and because of his friendliness, he enjoyed the love and respect of his neighbors. In the year 1824 he came to America, and lived with my parents. He died in 1840 at the age of 75 years. He was therefore born in the year 1765. A brother of grandfather Wahli was called Hans. He was called "Hüsere Hans."

Christian and Vreni Wahli, on Sonnenberg, whom I still clearly remember as old people, were his children. Christian Wahli had in his younger years and into old age, exceptional physical strength. They said that at one time, while he was threshing grain in Switzerland with a flail, several saltpetergatherers slipped under the shed, whereupon he let go several times with the flail on the bare boards, which caused the little people to leave in a hurry.

✓ His wife, Eisi Wahli, was supposed to be conversant with medical lore and in cases of sickness the people on Sonnenberg sought her advice and help. I still remember very well the powerful herb tea which was prepared by the pot full, according to her instructions. A teacupful of this tea, taken every hour, worked wonders.

When Rebecca Lichty - now Lehmann - took sick at the home of her brother-in-law David Winteregg, this tea was handed her in the customary doses. She turned in bed toward the wall and poured the bitter brew regularly into the "strawsack". In spite of this, or perhaps because of this, she recovered. Winteregg reported in a letter to Switzerland of her dangerous illness, and how she was restored to health through the grace of God and Eisi Wahli 's art. Anyone who wishes to check the truth of this tale can apply to P.C.A. Lehmann.

Eisi Wahli was a long, haggard figure, and a peculiar personality. After her death stories were circulated among the superstitious. Sometimes when I came, after dark, along the path from the old church to the Sugar Creek valley, and saw the desolate house standing there, I was almost frightened. But I never saw nor heard any spooks.

My parents had a very close, friendly relationship with Vreni Wahli. My sister Lisi was often sent to help her with her housework. She lived alone at the foot of the hill on which "Psalmen-Peter" lived. She was a good Vreni, and it was always a mystery to me why she had never married. One beautiful Sunday morning I was sent to her on an errand. There was a soft spring breeze blowing, and Vreni felt inclined to a walk; she came home with me, and she was so friendly that I chatted with her in the most unrestrained way. When we got home she said to my people: "Das ist doch os g'sprächigs Bubli." (That is certainly a talkative youngster.) I had to hear that often, later on, when I talked more than my brothers and sisters liked.

Grandmother Wahli was born Ramsäyer, from Eggiwÿl in the upper Emmen Valley. She died in 1807.

✓My mother, Barbara Wahli, was born August 31, 1802. At the time of her birth, her parents lived in "Tschafor" in the Court (Curt) Congregation, which was made up of Mennonites or Taufer who lived in the mountains and valleys west of the Munster Valley in the Bernese Jura. Her mother died when she was five years old. Probably she was then separated from her five older brothers and sisters; for she came to live with her uncle Peter Ramseÿer at Munschero, an hour from Münster and a half hour from Klein Tschampo. There in the clear mountain air, surrounded by a romantic nature and nourished by the mountaineer's diet of black bread, milk and potatoes, she grew - not to slender womanhood, but to a stocky figure, taking after her father. She was called "Little Babi" which, if I am not mistaken, was because uncle Ramseÿers family also had a girl named Barbara, who was larger.

Whoever leaves his old home to seek his fortunes in a distant land, can almost always name one thing which was better in the old home than in the new. In my mother's case it was the potatoes, which were nowhere so mealy or so tasty as at Munschero. It was fortunate for the people living on the rough mountain lands, that potatoes did so well there, for in many cases they were the chief article of diet.

On May 3, 1818 "Little Bäbi" was taken into the church by baptism and confession of faith, according to the teachings of the Täufer.

One of the members of the Jura Täufer settlement early in the nineteenth century, was the young Hans Luginbuhl, whose grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren now form the majority of the Bethel settlement. On the basis of several circumstances, I believe myself justified in thinking that Hans Luginbühl was a man of good judgment, and that his opinions on religious and secular matters was less narrow than that of many of his contemporaries. It is possible that in his younger years he travelled about a little in Switzerland, and got to know the country and people. It isn't possible to tell whether such travelling brought him to Grosshöchstetten, or whether other circumstances brought him there. Be that as it may, he stayed for some time at the home of my grandparents, and a close friendship sprang up between him and my father.

After returning to his home in the Jura, he married Barbara Lichty and they began their domestic life on a lease high on Binz Mountain. There Uncle C. Luginbuhl was born on May 4, 1813.

These were stormy times. The conqueror Napoleon I swept through Europe with his armies and brought terror and devastation in their wake. In the year 1812 the city of Moscow in Russia was reduced to ashes, and Napoleon's army there had been almost annihilated. Returning to France, Napoleon quickly assembled another army and in the year 1813 the great battle of Leipzig took place. Then

Napoleon was exiled to the island of Elbe, but in 1815 was again at the head of a large army; however, he was completely defeated at the battle of Waterloo, and his "world rule" was ended by his captivity on St. Helena.

I often heard my parents talk of those uncertain times, and especially of the fate of Napoleon. Occasionally divisions of his armies came through the mountain valleys of the Jura, and the peaceable inhabitants were required to put up the rough, noisy soldiers. These were anxious days, and the mountain dwellers had to give up many of their already sparse provisions.

About this time my father was about twenty years old, and he went from his home in Grosshöchstetten to the home of his friend Hans Luginbuhl in the Jura. My father found a warm welcome there, and looked upon the dwelling on the Binz as his own home. His stay there coincided with the childhood years of Uncle C. Luginbuhl. No one will doubt that Uncle C. Luginbuhl was a bright and attractive little boy, and my father took pleasure in him and often carried him in his arms, or took care of him when the mother was doing her housework.

Although my father had been baptized in his youth, and brought up in the reformed faith, which was, at least in earlier times somewhat at odds with the beliefs of the "Wiedertäufern", he seems to have liked it among the quiet Täufer in the isolated mountain valleys of the Jura, for from then on he shared with them the joys and sorrows of life. At that time there were more than one hundred Täufer families in the mountains near Court, in the Tschaiwo Valley between Monto and Grätteli and on Sonnenberg near Courtelary and Corgemont. They comprised several congregations, and lived in quiet isolation, cut off from the world.

The Täufer congregations originated in Switzerland at the time of the general Reformation.........

(Here follows a repetition of the material on Page 7, ending .... "the yearly rent and the bare necessities of life.")

The work entitled "Switzerland", by the noted writer Heinrich Zschokke, which was published in the thirties, contains a description of the old Basel bishopric and its inhabitants. Zschokke had probably travelled in these regions as early as the twenties, or even earlier, and he describes our people in the following way:

"Also over one hundred families of Täufer..........

(Here follows a repetition of the material on Pages 7, 8 and 9. ending .....And all is done so demurely.")

Thus far Zschokke's account. If the moral and social conditions in the Jura congregations are rightly judged in his writing, then we would have here at least one case where one could properly

refer to "the good old days." And that, in general, Zschokke was right, is confirmed by the reports of those who remember those times in the old home. When one considers the trials and tribulations, even actual want, which these upright people had to endure there, then one's nostalgia for "the good old days" is somewhat diminished.

Their occupation was chiefly agriculture and dairying, but nearly everyone had a handcraft besides to enable him to earn something during the long winters. Work in the open, in field and forest, had to be almost entirely halted during the winter because of heavy snows in these mountainous regions. So one cast about for occupations which could be performed indoors. Most of them were weavers.

(Repeat from Pages 9, 10 and 11 beginning "The occupation of these mountain dwellers"....., and ending "they accustomed themselves to hard work and thrift.")

Almost without exception, they were an industrious and home-loving people. The teacher which brought them up to industry and thrift was want. From childhood on they were accustomed to useful work and to household cares. Extravagances were not customary with them. Nevertheless, they did have their joys and pleasures. At work there were always many people together, and of both sexes, for the women and girls helped in the fields, hoed the clods after the plowing, and helped with the sowing, planting, harvesting and threshing, and always remembered the word, "It is not good that man should be alone." They were in the best sense of the word helpmeets to their men. Since neighbors helped each other out with work in the fields, so there wasn't often opportunity for boredom in such mixed company.

When their chief labors were done, they had their festivals, where they enjoyed themselves. After the harvest they had a "Sichelten", after threshing, a "Flagelten", etc. On these occasions they cooked, baked cookies, etc., or they went to the baker in the valley and got some white bread, and also got a jug of wine from the inn, depending on whether the farmer had any ready cash.

In the fall were "Flachsbrecheten". Young men and women took part. Joking and courting were allowed. In the autumn, also nearly every village or town had a market day. The young people looked forward to this, because they wanted to buy something for the money they had saved. The older people took a cow, a horse, sheep or pig, or some of their handwork to the market, to find a buyer there. All kinds of things were offered at these yearly markets, and presented in most alluring language by Jews from the seed of Abraham and Jews with Christian names. When a sale has been made, it sometimes takes a long time to decide who should pay for the wine, which buyer and seller are to consume together.

It would have been something strange to go to "Märit" (yearly market) and not drink any wine. It was a great treat for the young people to spend a few coins for Lebuchen and a glass of wine. Every young woman expects that he - she knows which one - will take her to the inn, drink a glass of wine with her, and perhaps sing a little song. That is the custom of the country and was at the time of our fathers, who practised it along with the rest. Was this "being like the world?" They didn't think of it that way. Dancing and other such amusements were not allowed in the congregations, and no member was allowed to partake of them elsewhere. In these respects they lived apart from the world. In clothing they loved simplicity, and their church rules resisted any innovation. Variety in cut or color was considered as vanity and arrogance. Mirrors were not often used. There were conscientious objections to its use, and children were discouraged from looking at a mirror, by the explanation that the devil was in it. In cases where religious scruples were not sufficient to combat vanity and arrogance, the permissible limits were sharply defined by church regulations and ordinances, and sharp watch was kept to prevent their infringement. In this way people often became one-sided, and lost sight of more important matters through emphasis on trivial externals.

At that time there were no churches or meeting houses among the Swiss Täufer congregations, and even in more recent times there were none. As noted in Zschokke's account, they meet at different homes etc.; each congregation had usually two preachers, chosen by lot. This was the equivalent of a call from on high.

Their church meetings were extremely simple. Usually two chapters were read, each section being discussed and compared with other portions of the scriptures. They made a point of preaching only God's words, and not their own. Even though they recommended themselves to the leadership of the holy spirit, and thought of themselves as wholly unworthy tools, through whom the holy spirit would reveal his truths to the listeners, those among them who were no thinkers sometimes connected one passage of the Scriptures with another which was entirely irrelevant, with the result that the listeners were amused, and so took the name and words of the Lord lightly.

The singing of our ancestors was in one part only; at the time of our parents, they began two-part singing, or singing in harmony; they sang the "Psalms of David, written in verse by Lobwasser, and set to music by Joh. Ulrich Schulzberger, musical director in Bern; according to governmental command, and with their gracious consent." They sang like the reformed congregations of the state church. This singing in harmony, however, was strictly condemned by some of the more bigoted church members. One preacher remarked that singing bass was a service to the devil. There was at that time, and is still today, among the various churches, a group of people who think the devil's influence is visible in the most everyday things. The Täufer congregations were none the less

free of the more ignorant superstitions. I do not remember ever hearing that the dreadful belief in witchcraft took root among them.

When our forbears were forced, by persecution, to take refuge in the Jura, they had room for development, although it was difficult and slow. As the number of families increased, it nevertheless became difficult for many to find places to live. Governmental regulations made it impossible for them to buy land, even if they had had the means to do so. The rent for land was high, and they had other fees to pay; the poorer heads of families found it almost impossible to care for their numerous children on the rough, mountainous heights. Due to these circumstances, a number of families made a decision whose gravity we, with our modern travel facilities, can hardly appreciate. They began to look toward the free states of North America, where so many refugees had found a haven. There, according to reports, were spacious and fruitful lands which awaited the settler, and why could one not make a better living there? Of course, this goal could be attained only after a long and dangerous journey, both by land and water, and the potentially fruitful lands were covered by mammoth virgin forests, which would have to be cleared before crops could be raised. But in the old home only poverty awaited them, while this hope beckoned them across the ocean. And what difficulties does not hope surmount!

The first impetus to emigration was the "Famine period," between 1815 and 1818. At that time there was actual famine, in the Jura congregations. If I remember correctly, my parents referred to this time as the wet years, when the potatoes rotted and other crops failed also. The old people often told about how little there was to eat, especially among the poorer people who had no reserve from previous years. Instead of ordinary bread, they had only "Kleien-kuchen" (made out of grain hulls). Herbs and roots were gathered and eaten, and much sickness ensued.

In these difficult circumstances, Benedict Schrag, from the nearby Canton Basel, or Baselland, decided to emigrate to America. He and his family and a young friend, Hans Burkhalter, arrived safely in Ohio, which was then a young state, and Schrag settled in Green Township, Wayne County. I can remember his son Peter very well, since he often came from "Chippaway" to visit my parents.

Soon after his arrival in Ohio, Benedict Schrag wrote a long lètter to Switzerland, in which he praised the advantages of his new home, and enumerated the favorable circumstances which awaited immigrants. This glowing account awakened the desire to emigrate among the Sonnenberg congregations and in the surrounding area.

Many of the men, in the prime of life, began to consider emigration in earnest. The last year of the "Famine Time", 1818, was over and the spring of 1819 was approaching. In several of the mountain homes on Sonnenberg there was unusual activity, for preparations were being made for the journey to America.

At this time, March 6, 1819, my parents were married. Although they were not among those who emigrated at this time, they may have decided even at this time, to follow later, if reports were favorable.

When the spring of 1819 awakened, and the snow on the mountain slopes was melted by the sun, the first group of emigrants from the Jura was ready to depart. It consisted of Peter Lehmann, Isaac Sommer and David Kirchhofer and their families, and Ulrich Lehmann (a bachelor).

It was in the month of April when, amidst many tears and thousands of good wishes, the emigrants took leave. Filled with apprehension, those who were left behind looked long at the little band of wanderers, and the latter looked back many times at the beloved valleys and the wild heights of the Jura. For this they had much time, for in those days one didn't travel on rails, in fast trains, but on the road, with carts drawn by a single animal, beside which the people walked on foot. Their possessions consisted only of absolute essentials. A clothes chest, a food chest and beds were about all they took with them.

The first five-hundred mile journey took them through France, by way of Paris, to Havre on the sea. There they sold their horses, but their wagons and their freight were loaded on the sailing vessel by means of which they were to make the ocean voyage. There is no record of the length of time this group spent in Havre before beginning the voyage, but there were cases where emigrants had to wait several weeks before their ship sailed.

The sea voyage of our pioneer band lasted forty-seven days. With what longing they looked toward the western horizon, where the shore of the promised land was to appear, can easier be imagined than described. But at last this goal was reached, and they stood in the young city of New York, and on the land of the American continent.

They again bought horses, hitched them to the wagons which had been brought, and began the difficult and dangerous journey overland from New York, by way of Philadelphia, Lancaster, Pittsburg and Canton, to the neighborhood of Wooster in Wayne County, Ohio. The five-hundred mile journey led over bad roads and through inhospitable regions. The "Far West" was at that time just beginning to be inhabited. There were mountains to be climbed, rivers to drive through, for there were no bridges or ferries to carry one across. One stood, or swam, often in danger of one's life. That even the inhospitable virgin forest seemed homelike to them, when their journey was over, can easily be imagined. About four miles from Wooster they found shelter in a schoolhouse, which they occupied together for some time. From here they explored the neighborhood, looking for a suitable place to settle. After a long search, they decided to settle where the middle of the Sonnenberg congregation now is. And now the problem was to clear the

forests, build cabins, and transform the forests into fields. That was a hard piece of work, and the settlers suffered extreme deprivation for a considerable time. But they were accustomed to hard work and a simple life. The work was probably less of a burden to them than the loneliness and isolation, for they lived here practically alone in a wilderness which, for all they knew, stretched from Greenland to Mexico, and which was inhabited, here and there, by backwoodsmen, whose language and customs were strange to them. Circumstances did, however, lead to some intercourse with the early American settlers, for they already had a supply of foodstuffs, and were willing to trade corn, potatoes, etc. for labor.

In spite of the difficult beginnings, the pioneers soon recognized that, with time, their labors would earn much greater rewards than in the wild mountains of Switzerland. They therefore sent a detailed account to the old home, and praised the advantages which were here offered the poor man, how one could buy land cheaply, and become the owner of a farm. They did not forget to mention the noble freedom of belief, which they enjoyed.

This report inflamed the desire to go to America, among the people in the Jura. Seven families, one of which was made up of my parents, and several unmarried people, thereupon began preparations for the journey. They were dependent on the same means of travel which was used by the earlier band, and so there were soon a number of small wagons ready, one of which contained the few possessions of my parents and those of Jacob Bichsel. It was April 10, 1821, when, in the neighborhood of Court, they said farewell to their relatives and friends. The road which my parents and their closest travelling companions, Jacob Bichsel and family, followed in order to join the others of the company, passed along the foot of the Binz Mountain, where my father's faithful friend, Hans Luginbuhl, lived. Here they stopped. Uncle C. Luginbuhl, who at that time was nine years old, remembers yet, more than 75 years later, how he and his parents hurried from their home down to the road to say "God bless you" to the travellers. His father gave my father, in parting a "Zohnpfennig" (piece of money). This token of love was certainly highly prized, for my parents were poor. If I am not mistaken, they barely had enough to pay for the journey, and I am under the impression that the undertaking was made possible for them by the generosity of Jacob Bichsel. If one remembers how these people helped each other, one can certainly remember them with great respect.

The others who comprised this second emigration were Hans Lehmann (the oldest) Abraham Lehman, Hans and Christian Lehman, Abraham Guercher, Peter Hofstetter and David Zuercher.

What a responsibility lies on parents who undertake, with helpless children, a journey of almost five thousand miles, lasting five to six months, and that with meager means! My oldest sister

Marian was at that time a little over a year old, and no doubt there were in the group others of about her age.

As did their predecessors, this band travelled through France to Havre, and from there via sailing ship to New York.

My mother suffered dreadfully from seasickness, and was not free from it during the entire seven-week voyage.

On the 4th of July, 1821, exactly 45 years after the colonies declared their independence, and during the second term of President Monroe, their ship landed in New York harbor. Since a contagious disease had broken out aboard ship, they had to remain in quarantine for some time. My father related that during the time of waiting he was allowed to go with some of the ship's crew to a certain point on land. The small boat was so overloaded that it seemed to him the edge was only a finger's breadth above the water, and he had scant hope of reaching land.

One can easily imagine that this waiting within sight of the promised land tried the patience of the travellers. When they were finally delivered from the sailing ship, which had few conveniences, their joy was all the greater.

One of the most important pieces of business in New York was the purchase of a horse, for each wagon. A horse cost about fifteen dollars.

Now they went by way of Philadelphia to Lancaster. When they arrived there, my parents' means were no doubt completely exhausted. In addition, family circumstances made further travel impossible. They found friendly hospitality there, in the home of Martin Nussli of the Menisten Congregation, and they stayed there while the other emigrants went on to Ohio. Here, on August 9, 1821, their second daughter, Elizabeth, was born. They were staying near Elizabethtown, and perhaps the name of their daughter was to be a constant reminder of the kindness shown them here. They lived there a year, and then the brother of their host, Preacher Christian Nüssli, loaned them a horse and wagon, and so they travelled to the new Sonnenberg settlement in Ohio, where they were cordially received by their former travelling companions. In this early time they helped each other as much as possible, and the settlement was in a sense a large family.

My parents bought land 2½ miles south of Dalton, on the high ground which is separated by Sugar Creek valley from the flatter area where most of the first families settled. There, in the shadow of giant chestnut trees, and beside a spring which gushed from the hill, they built their block hut. The beginning was difficult and meager, but they hoped for better times. And the reports sent back to Switzerland filled many there with the same hope. In 1822 several families came, and in 1824 there was a large company.

Among these was Hans Luginbühl in whose home on the Binz my father had spent many hours, as well as Peter Welty, the grandfather of my "better half."

The home of the Welty family was in Ruderswyl, Oberamt Signau, Canton Bern, that is the same congregation which was the home of my grandparents on my father's side.

As early as 1537 the name of Bernhard Wälti appears; as a Täufer he died the death of a martyr. At the time of emigration the family had lived for many years in the little mountain valley of Tschaiwo near Court in the Jura.

The first couple of this family about whom we have any information were Ulrich and Barbara Welty. She was born Lehmann, and her home was Wattenwyl, near Worb, Canton Bern. They lived as poor lease-holders in the Tschaiwo Valley and had five children, among them the above-named Peter Welty, who was born in 1778. His mother died January 10, 1793. Ulrich Welty later married Barbara Bichsel, who bore him four children. He reached an age high in the eighties.

Peter Welty married Barbara Gerber May 12, 1820, from Langnau. The marriage was performed by Ulrich Rothlisberger in the Tschaiwo Valley. There, on the 8th of June 1821, Ulrich Welty was born. Since they had no prospects in Switzerland other than to be poor lease-holders like their parents, they decided to emigrate. Here two more sons were born, Christian and Johannes.

The parents did not reach a very old age. They both died in the year 1836, the mother on April 1, at the age of 48 years, and the father on July 26, 58 years old.

On high ground which rises from the valley which winds eastward from the old Sonnenberg church, their mortal remains were buried, and beside them rest many who shared life's trials with them.

In the company which came in 1824 were my mother's cousins, Christian and Verena Wahli, whom I have mentioned before. Also my mother's sister, Anna, married to Nikolaus Hofstetter, was in this company. Several of their children died on the way. Aunt Anna died ? years after her arrival in America, and left behind two children, John and Lisi (Bieri), my only cousins on Sonnenberg. Nikolaus Hofstetter married a second time; his second wife was Anna Moser (sister of Peter and Jake Moser). As far back as I can remember, they were our nearest neighbors, living in the valley formed by the brook which originated in the spring at the foot of our hill. They were particularly intimate friends of my parents. Their children were my first playmates, and when the family later moved to a more distant farm, I experienced my first pain at parting. As far as I know, Mother Anna is still living at the

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time I write this - 1899. (She died in August, 1899)

In 1825 Ulrich and Peter Moser came. They were distant relatives of my father. They chose homesteads near ours, and as far back as I can remember, they were among our nearest neighbors. Peter Moser's orchard and ours stood on the same hill, his on the shady side and ours on the sunny side. But since the "mountains" here were not as high as in Switzerland, his orchard got just as much sunshine as ours, and even if the hill had been a drawback, Peter would have had enough energy to remove it. Even in his riper years, he was an unusually agile man, who could beat the youngsters in all kinds of physical prowess, and who knew how to entertain a crowd with his jokes. He was successful in everything he undertook, and is now an old man, surrounded by his children, who live in convenient homes. They were our play- and schoolmates, and in remembering the past they come vividly to mind.

Ulrich Moser settled near Sugarcreek, down the valley from us. He built the first sawmill in the neighborhood, which obtained its power from the damned up water from the creek. Through this mill and over the dam led the path on which I went, over forty years ago, to German school, where I got lickings from schoolmaster A. Sprunger. One morning I fell off the narrow path that led from the mill to the dam, and almost hurt myself. Anyway, I pretended to myself that the accident had been so dangerous, that I clambered out on the mill side and wandered back home again, where I barely escaped greater injury! In the milldam and other "depths" of the creek I often fished, and had great results, according to my ideas at that time.

Later Ulrich Moser left his farm to his son, Abraham, whom I remember very vividly, along with his family. Many people considered them odd, but this did not prevent us from associating with them as good neighbors. Abraham Moser died many years ago of a long and painful illness, and his family is scattered, far from the old home.

Among others who settled "across the creek", that is, on the east side, opposite the actual Sonnenberg, were David Zuercher, Jacob Bichsel, Peter P. Lehman, Johann Schwarz and Peter Hofstetter. The latter died before my time, but his wife, old Hofstetter Bäbi and her family were such unusual personalities that one could not forget them. As neighbors they were the most peaceful and unassuming people in the world. On the other hand, several of them made themselves conspicuous because of their strict religious scruples and as moral watchdogs. According to their convictions, there was too much worldliness in the congregation, and evil influences were rampant. They grieved over this with hysterical sorrow, and admonished and quoted scriptures without any visible result. They reaped for their pains only contempt, and yet they acted upon noble motives, even though not always with insight, or wisdom. I once took it upon myself to defend learning or "worldly wisdom" in their presence, and although learning rests upon facts, it almost went under then.

David Zuercher was the veterinarian and horse-handler of the settlement. He came to America a bachelor, and married "Peter's Eisi" ((daughter of P. Lehmann) on Sonnenberg, who never spurned a good bargain. They lived almost adjoining us, on a nice well-ordered farm, and they had worked themselves up to considerable prosperity.

It may have been jealousy, but there were people who thought they cared too much for money. At that time I knew nothing about money, and it was always a joy to me to go to Zuerchers.

Eisi was a vivacious woman, and she knew how to tease the young people pleasantly about their love affairs. In addition, their home was the gathering place for the young people, and the physical layout of their place always had an attraction for me. It may have been because the family made a favorite of me.

David Zuerchers lived near the road which leads from Sonnenberg through the Sugarcreek valley and over the "Bichsel Hill" to Dalton. At the foot of this hill lived Jacob Bichsel, on whose wagon my parents rode when they came to the settlement. Here also, the virgin forest had been transformed into a most attractive and home-like dwelling, which was a pleasure to visit. It was occupied by a large family, which for a long time, attracted many visitors. Father Bichsel was superior in education and general knowledge to many of those who emigrated at the same time, and he had considerable facility in writing. He was a man of decision, and he had the courage to express his opinions openly. Like Wilhelm Tell, he probably would not have bowed to the hat of the lordly Gessler.

A man of similar self-confidence and courage of his convictions was Peter P. Lehmann, whose farm adjoined the last- mentioned two farms on the west and south. He was a son of the pioneer settler Peter Lehmann, and since he was only six years old at the time of the emigration, he grew up with the settlement, and knew all about it from experience. He married Kathrina Luginbuhl, and some years later their family was the center of a youthful circle where one gladly spent an hour, even though it might be late at night.

As deacon P. P. Lehmann had a great deal to do with the affairs of the church, and since he was well versed in the church- and martyr history of the Mennonite Church, and studied the scriptures with zeal, he was one of the most able defenders of Mennonite doctrine.

At the beginning of the sixties, when the Civil War broke out and the waves of political agitation penetrated to the Sonnenberg settlement, P.P. Lehmann took a firm stand against slavery and for the Union. He aroused, thereby, the opposition of the extreme "Peace-Democrats" who were called "Rebels" and "Copperheads" by the Republicans. Friction developed within the church, and this was no doubt one of the reasons which prompted him to make a trip to Missouri in 1865 with C. Luginbuhl and Ulrich Welty, to look at some land there. In 1867 followed his move to Missouri.

Hans Schwarz, a brother-in-law and adjoining neighbor of P. P. Lehmann, made himself useful as mason and maker of wooden shoes. As a boy I had a pair of wooden shoes made in his "factory", and when I ran in a hurry through the room, the windows started to rattle and the dog began to bark outside. The wooden-shoe industry was no small matter in the early days of the settlement. Men, women and children wore wooden shoes, and a guest who appeared in them at wedding festivities was not turned away because he was not properly dressed. P. P. Lehmann brought wooden shoes along to Missouri, and a neighbor boy claims to have seen him "galloping" around in them one day. The following incident is related in remembrance of the times of wooden shoes.

P. P. Lehmann's house on Sonnenberg stood on a height, at the base of which was a spring. The path which led down to this was very steep, and since winter often brought ice, a trip to the well at such a time was quite a venture. Peter thought about ways and means to overcome this difficulty, and one day, when the cold northwest wind howled through the Sugarcreek Valley, the boys received orders to strew the path with straw, and pour water on it. When, after some time, the safety device appeared to be well frozen, Peter, in his wooden shoes, stepped gingerly on the upper end, and had just declared "es het scho zimmeli", when he slipped, and slid in a sitting position down the hill, carrying all the wet straw along.

That is a long time ago, and many things have changed since then. Wooden shoes are no longer worn. Old Hans Schwarz is dead, and some people imagine that several of his children are possessed by witches.

Were one to make a survey of the whole Sonnenberg settlement, and report the peculiarities and fates of the individual families and persons, there would be rich material for a series of interesting character sketches and stories, and much could be told that was funny or serious. Of the latter - the serious - let me mention something about the trials and difficulties of the first settlement.

The virgin forest, which covered the plains and hills where they elected to work and live, consisted of mighty chestnuts, oaks, beeches, hickories, walnuts and maples, intermingled with elms, lindens and other trees. If one could not find shelter in a block-house built by an earlier settler, one built, in the deep forest shadow, a kind of shelter made of poles and tree bark, and then the chosen building site was cleared with heavy blows of the axe. The tree trunks were cut into "blocks" of uniform length, and when there were enough for four walls of the proper height, the neighbors came for a day and helped put up the house. At each corner of the building was a "corner man" who took care of the needed carpentry there, and so the building rose straight into the air. In the evening, after strenuous but joyful labor, when the sun sank behind the tops of the surrounding forest trees, the block house stood there, and the eye of its owner rested upon it with a pleasure which a king might have envied. Of course, considerable further work had to be done before one could move in.

The roof had to be made out of rough, split staves, and weighted down with poles, for iron nails were not available to nail down the staves, or shingles. Then a door and windows had to be sawed or cut out. Also a hearth had to be built, which served for both cooking and heating, for in those days there were no iron stoves in the "far West."

The boards for the door and floor were finished with an axe; also the lumber for tables, benches, bedsteads, etc. As soon as the dwelling had the minimum essentials, one moved in and began clearing the forest. From early till late the blows of the axe echoed through the surrounding wilderness; to individuals the forest sometimes seemed an insurmountable obstacle. One of the settlers expressed his discouragement in the wish that a bear might appear and eat him. Yet every day the crash of falling forest giants announced a new victory, and the rays of the sun penetrated earlier the next morning into the clearing, or lingered longer in the evening on the conquered spot.

The uncompromising destruction of the beautiful forest nevertheless often gave the settlers a feeling of remorse, but they had to give in to the inevitable. Only the nicest trunks were made into fence rails. The others were cut through several times, or burned off. As soon as one had a clearing of such logs, the neighbors were invited for a day to "roll" them, or roll them into big heaps, so that they could be burned. In the earliest times the settlers were often busy among each other for weeks at a time with this strenuous labor. In doing this the workers were divided into two teams, and the terrain divided into two halves, and each team tried to finish before the other one. This was strenuous work, and the Swiss strength which they had brought with them stood them in good stead. For such work, they "strengthened" themselves with genuine corn liquor, which, in time, was to be found in every log cabin in the settlement. Occasionally the "backwoodsmen" were a little "lively", but they were always careful to avoid inebriation.

When the mild spring breezes began to blow and the winter's snow had disappeared, one could see at night the numerous lights of the settlement, made by the smoldering fires in the log cabins of the peaceful victors. Long before they were all extinguished, began the plowing of the ground, which was by no means easy with the numerous tree stumps. As draft animals they generally used a pair of patient oxen. Slowly they furrowed their acres, and the crashing of roots was a warning to watch one's shinbones. Instead of working the furrows with a hoe, as was done in Switzerland, the roots which had been torn up by the plow had to be cleared away here, or, after the first year, the sprouts which had come up around the stumps had to be destroyed.

One can easily imagine that the founders of the settlements had numerous deprivations to endure, along with their tedious labors. It was probably seldom that they experienced real hunger, although there were cases where newly planted potatoes were dug up again

and eaten because there was no other food. In general the lack of food was not so noticeable, for one could get food in exchange for work, but in the beginning they had to get along with potatoes and corn. Throughout a large surrounding area, industry was in its very beginning, so that the erection of grain mills was still in the future. The closest mills were twenty or thirty miles away, and there was no transportation by means of which they could be reached. One of the first settlers took a sack of wheat on horseback to Canton, for himself and his neighbors, and if they had run out of bread beforehand, they had to wait three days for another supply of flour. A three-day trip to the mill robbed the overworked people of valuable time. Even though in the earliest days there was scarcity of food here and there, this lack was soon overcome. The housewives dug garden plots in the virgin soil, and grew vegetables. Hogs were obtained, which, in the fall, lived on acorns, hickory nuts and chestnuts in the woods, and soon furnished a plentiful supply of meat. Neither did it take long to overcome the strongly felt lack of milk, for each settler obtained a cow as soon as possible. If one had several cows, he felt rich. During the summer the cattle also found their food in the woods, but often they wandered miles away in the wilderness, and had to be hunted. In doing so, people often wandered barefoot over stick and stone, following the distant clang of the bell into unknown regions, and were often assailed by anxious thoughts lest they get lost, or be bitten by a rattlesnake hidden in the leaves. The recovered cattle were often the best guide back home. Later the increasing herds of cattle were also the guide to prosperity.

The greatest deprivation which the settlers experienced in the first years was the lack of clothing, after the things which they had brought from Switzerland wore out because of rough work. Cloth was nowhere to be had, since spinning and weaving was still an unknown industry in this wilderness, and housewives were at their wits' end to provide clothing for their families. Particularly in large families, and during the winter cold, the lack of clothing was a bitter deprivation. At that time one had to reckon with entirely different conditions from those which obtain today, where surplus farm products can be exchanged for materials bought in a store.

For any surplus which the settlers had, there was no market, for there were no exchange centers within a hundred miles. The town of Massillon now stands on land which was for sale at $2.50 per acre in 1824. Wheat was worth 25 cents per bushel, and if one wished to get money for it, it had to be taken to Philadelphia in the state of Pennsylvania. On the other hand, cloth was very expensive. A yard of muslin cost 50 cents. From this one can figure out what a good winter suit must have cost.

Under such conditions it was impossible for the settlers to buy the material needed for new clothing, but in this case, as well as in others, they sought to help themselves as soon as possible

with their own fabrication. They raised sheep and cultivated flax, and the women and girls spun yarn of wool and linen, which was woven into cloth on homemade looms, by those who had learned weaving in Switzerland. In those days the girls and young women wore coarse linen dresses which were dyed yellow or black with tree bark, and the young men went around in white work or "Kuder" pants. From family records dating back to this time, it is evident that young love bloomed as well among those thus roughly attired as among those dressed in the finest style.

With clothing production, the manufacture of shoes went hand in hand. People went to work in woods or field, wearing homemade wooden shoes, and even to church or to a wedding. In general, however, these were soon replaced by leather shoes. On the other hand, boots were considered for a long time as offensive luxuries. Also suspenders were supposed to be pleasing to the devil.

Hats, both for men and women, were braided out of straw. Women's hats consisted of a low crown and wide brim, and were worn only while working in the garden or the fields, never in church. The hats were designed to give shade, and served this purpose much better than the modern scarecrows. In the winter men wore peaked caps, knitted of white wool.

As with clothing, so with implements and furniture, the essentials were mostly homemade. They built wagons, whose wheels consisted of the sawed-off end of a thick tree trunk. They made tables, benches, bedsteads, etc. out of boards which they had finished themselves, for they had neither the means nor the time to build sawmills.

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